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The Constitutional Right of Newspapers to Carriage in the Mails.

The newspapers of the United States should awaken, if they are not already awake, to the surpassing importance of the question just now before the Supreme Court of the United States for a decision.

It is not from some burlesque opera or from the mouth of some absurd jurist-consult in that Wonderland of topsyturvy thought which ALICE visited that there comes the amazing assertion of autocratic power to limit the freedom of the press, or to coerce its utterances, which is contained in the following sentences:

"We submit that Congress has the undoubted power to say what in its opinion is no hurtful to the public welfare that it should not pass through the mails and that it may enforce that opinion without its correctness being subject to judicial review." * * * It surely may prescribe any conditions concerning the mail matter itself, whether as to size, weight, character of contents, purposes for which sent, etc., and it may likewise prescribe conditions concerning the person depositing it in the mail, especially if the conditions attached to the sender bear some relation to the thing sent. * * * If such views [those of a newspaper's owners] are expressed in the paper, Government can doubtless exclude them, just as Congress could now exclude all papers advocating bribery, prohibition, anarchy or protective tariff if a majority of Congress thought such views against public policy."

This was the language of a high law officer of the Federal Government, the Solicitor-General, arguing to the court in behalf of the unlimited power of Congress to regulate the postal service of the United States; to the extent even of deciding what political opinions, expressed in newspaper type, shall be admissible to mails and what political opinions in newspapers shall be denied the privilege of transmission from post office to post office.

The First Amendment of the Constitution declares that "Congress shall make no law * * * abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press." If the Solicitor-General of the United States is right in the propositions printed above, this precious guarantee is worthless; for it can be nullified effectually by the mere exercise of legislative power whereof the admitted province is the arrangement of administrative details of the service and the police regulation necessary for the protection of the morals in the community. The police power is extended to the censorship of political opinion. According to this outrageous doctrine a majority vote in Congress, immune from judicial review or rebuke, may close the mails to newspapers advocating the prohibition of the sale of liquor, just as it may close the mails to papers containing obscene literature. A majority vote in Congress may bar out newspapers containing articles in favor of a tariff for protection, just as it may exclude those which lend their advertising columns to the traps of notorious swindlers.

The Solicitor-General's doctrine is susceptible of even more ridiculous application without straining it in the least. If a majority in Congress should conclude that the dissemination of Democratic campaign arguments or documents, either in the newspapers or in pamphlet form, was against "public policy" it could prevent their circulation through the mails. Equally as to Republican literature, or Socialist literature, or Progressive literature. The ultimate censorship and the unrestrained power of exclusion from the mails he holds to be in Congress, and no judicial tribunal exists which is competent to enforce the constitutional rights of a free press.

In his closing argument for the freedom of the press before the Supreme Court at Washington yesterday Mr. JAMES M. BECK pointed to DANIEL WEBSTER's reply to a similar proposition years ago, when it was urged that Congress should purge the mails of anti-slavery journals. "Any law," said WEBSTER, "distinguishing what shall or shall not go into the mails founded on the sentiments of the paper and making a deputy postmaster a judge I should say is expressly unconstitutional."

If some of our contemporaries do not yet apprehend the full significance

of the recent legislation asserting unbridled Federal control over the newspapers through the merely administrative power to regulate the mails, we advise them to study Mr. BECK's masterly presentation of the case in their behalf and for their constitutional right to be free from arbitrary censorship and discriminating treatment. And it is proper that they should know that this service of championship is rendered voluntarily by Mr. BECK in a spirit of public duty and not as an ordinary professional engagement.

Where is this doctrine of absolute legislative power to end, if sustained as to the newspapers and the mails? If Congress can constitutionally exercise the power claimed for Federal authority by the Solicitor-General as an incident of the ordinary regulation of the postal service, has it not the same power over individual opinion as an incident of the regulation of foreign and interstate commerce? Does not the Solicitor-General believe that Congress by statutory enactment, under Section 8 of the First Article, might prescribe that no person advocating prohibition, let us say, or favoring a protective tariff, shall enjoy the privilege of transportation on the trains of interstate railways or on ocean steamships; no person, indeed, whose political opinions are deemed by the existing majority in Congress to be opposed to good public policy? And this without recourse to the courts, no matter what the constitutional guarantee may be!

When has there been so sweeping, so preposterous an assertion of undelimited Federal power since a former Solicitor-General of the United States instructed the Supreme Court, in the case of *Kansas vs. Colorado*, that "all powers which are national in their scope must be found vested in the Congress of the United States"; a doctrine so revolutionary that the Supreme Court, in the memorable decision rendered by Mr. Justice BREWER, promptly proceeded to put it under the heel of the highest judicial authority?

One German Way.

Rarely has the German habit of making even pacific official utterances emphatic by a little sabre rattling been more characteristically or unfortunately exemplified than in the latest speech of the Imperial Chancellor. Having only reassuring news to announce and actually reporting an Anglo-German cooperation which might have satisfied the most anxious in two nations, VON BETHMANN-HOLLWEG succeeded in disseminating not confidence but apprehension merely by the arrogance and truculence of his words.

The contrast between the German Chancellor's words and those of ASQUITH at Nottingham or POINCARÉ at Nantes, on each of which occasions the Balkan situation supplied a text, is immeasurably to the disadvantage of the German statesman and serves to explain why those who are the best friends of Germany abroad find the official utterances of her statesmen frequently irritating and as in this instance actually indefensible. German statesmen can well afford to let the memories of Agadir grow a little fainter before attempting to imperil the peace of the world again by methods which in recent years have increased German unpopularity rather than her prestige abroad.

The annual messages of the Presidents before Mr. TAFT's accession were usually hard reading, because they dealt at appalling length with a multiplicity of subjects. President TAFT's method of giving Congress information on one important topic at a time concentrates attention upon it, and as his messages are not overloaded with detail the method is much more effective. Yesterday he dealt with "Our Foreign Relations" in a style of masterly simplicity. Congress needed the enlightenment, for it displays at times a woful ignorance of contemporary diplomacy.

In large part Mr. TAFT's message to Congress is a demonstration of the necessity and beneficence of what has been derisively termed "Dollar Diplomacy." The aptness of the expression the President admits. "The diplomacy of the present Administration," he says, "has sought to respond to modern ideas of commercial intercourse." But while it has swelled the exports of the United States and contributed to material progress in Central America and Santo Domingo it has also settled international disputes and promoted peace. The proof President TAFT submits:

"Through the efforts of American diplomacy several wars have been prevented or ended. I refer to the successful tripartite mediation of the Argentine Republic, Brazil and the United States between Peru and Ecuador, the bringing of the boundary dispute between Panama and Costa Rica to peaceful arbitration, the averting of the various preparations when Hayti and the Dominicans were on the verge of hostilities, the stopping of a war in Nicaragua, the halting of internecine strife in Honduras. The Government of the United States was thanked for its influence toward the restoration of amicable relations between the Argentine Republic and Bolivia."

essential reforms to which China is pledged by treaty with the United States and other Powers." Helping the countries of Central America to help themselves is not pure altruism, of course. Mr. TAFT has never pretended that it was. With prosperity and good order prevailing in those countries the United States would receive trade benefits and maintenance of the Monroe Doctrine would become less of a problem. No one can dispute the fact that "patient non-intervention and steadfast recognition of constituted authority" has been a felicitous Mexican policy, and the dollar has loomed large in it too.

Christmas Blackmail.

In another place on this page we print a letter headed "Christmas Blackmail," in which the author describes a system of petty extortion as indecent as it is notorious. We do not think he is over-emphatic when he describes what amounts to blackmail as "rotten" and "beastly." The fact that in some instances a particularly intelligent employer of labor has won the affection of his working people and that they actually do want to give him some trinket in testimony of their sentiment serves only to throw into high relief the sordid nature of the greater number of these familiar "subscriptions."

Such impositions as these are responsible for the feeling of contempt which so many intelligent persons have for the exchange of Christmas gifts, a custom that becomes annually more of a burden and less an expression of good will. In certain common cases it degenerates into meaningless competition; in others it sinks to the level of petty larceny. In none of these extravagances is present the spirit of Christmas, and, uninspired by this, the bearing of gifts, great or small, is a senseless and demoralizing practice.

Our Letter Writers.

Praise to the face is often disgrace, and it has never been the habit of THE SUN to expose itself to that misfortune. Whereas people "amuse us when they abuse us," as some lost poet sings. But we do feel a pride and pleasure in these just remarks about our daily parliament and federation of men, women and sociologists, philosophers, philologists, publicists, cynics and sentimentalists, reformers and reactionaries, visionaries and "kickers," ascetics and epicureans, amateurs of old customs, inventors and destroyers of religions, ethnologists, baseball cranks—but what's the use of pretending to catalogue the mighty, the charming, the curious, the learned, the perhaps occasionally wrongheaded tribes to which nothing human is alien? Listen to one of many friendly voices:

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—SIR: In the SUN of November 29 is an editorial entitled 'Our Letter Writers.' To its truth and sentiment I beg to offer a fervent Amen! For several years and many a time I have been on the point of inflicting upon a vote of thanks for the space and freedom accorded to your letter writers. * * * There is always something entertaining or instructive or whimsical or original in the space spared to your wise and other-wise letter writers. You give us all chance to expose our foolishness, if we please; to 'write ourselves down' an ass; to share with others a good thought or humorous story; to crack a joke; to praise our public servants for their well-doing; to call attention to nuisances that should be abated; to quote a line from the poets or an ad rem passage from the classics. In a word, true to your motto, conspicuously in your letter writers' columns, THE SUN shines for all."

—N. B. REMICK.

PINE HILL, December 2.

We beg to salute and thank once more this chorus of old and newer friends, among whose opinions not the least welcome are those of occasional indignation or vehement girding at the opinions of THE SUN.

Robinsonite.

If the bank wrecker ROBINOVITCH, who calls himself ROBIN, escapes punishment, the prosecuting officer of New York county will have added to his establishment a bureau for the sale of indulgences sinister in its menace to the community beyond exaggeration.

Should this betrayer of fiduciary institutions go free with the connivance of the authorities, notice will be served that the danger now associated with the less brutal forms of robbery is in inverse ratio to the disclosures that the suspect chooses to make. Let it be borne constantly in mind that crimes of the kind committed by ROBINOVITCH are never the work of one man. They enlist the active cooperation of many dishonest agents. Shall it become a fixed principle of criminal procedure in this important jurisdiction that a convenient confession will buy immunity?

No service to the State, whether rendered in malice, dread, or true contrition, can meet the demands of justice in such cases as ROBINOVITCH's if it is the price of freedom from prosecution for accomplished crimes.

In a letter printed on this page this morning the Rev. Dr. MINOT J. SAVAGE gives a memory of two of ROBERT COLLYER, that fine old "athlete of God," as the mediaevalists might have called him. Mr. COLLYER lived so long as to survive the generations that knew him; and dying he is but a name to a time busy with so many noisier names.

It can do no harm or good, perhaps, if some of the aged among us dwell for a moment on that stately presence, that kindled and kindling eye, that face of power and benignity, those locks that time had to silver turned when present patriarchs were in knickerbockers, that clear voice of the born orator but without any affectations of the elocutionist, who that ever saw and heard ROBERT COLLYER, we won't say in the pulpit but on the platform, in the days of the "lyceum," when men like EMMERSON and HOLMES were content with a hard earned \$50 a night, and an occasional night at that to be passed in the spare bed whose arctic sheets had been submitted to the warming pan—who can forget that front of dignity and that eye of fire?

What did he say? It was enough that,

professing for years unpopular opinions, he looked like some great saint and doctor of a church not his. Remembering him, we think for no reason of another "lyceum lecturer." WENDELL PHILLIPS, the most sensitive and polished of Ionian orators, a brow of honey and a heart of bitterness inextinguishable, bland, Quakerish, gentle, terrible without noise.

There was a giant or two in the prime of ROBERT COLLYER.

The Greeks on their side seem to fear the Bulgars bearing gifts, particularly peace offerings.

The news that Switzerland is collecting war supplies doubtless forecasts a determination at Berne to demand a Swiss "window on the sea" as compensation for non-interference in the Balkans.

The angloform is a thinker.—*Newspaper Headline.*

And, compared with some humans, a splendid thinker, the angloform.

"Half the world to go insane."—*Dr. Hyslop.*

Doesn't the good Doctor mean the other half?

It begins to look as if the Hon. Woodrow WILSON would carry Bermuda too.

In another column a clever Albany correspondent who seems to have a knowledge of and sympathy with the country minister, imagines, a little irreverently perhaps, the unhappiness of that much-enduring man at the loss of the doctrine of eternal damnation. Well, it is a loss which would have broken hearts of the old race of Protestant divines, but nobody, secular or ecclesiastical, has any right to complain that there is not "hell" enough visible in this world. Fighting it to the end of his days and strength, bringing up a large family on a meagre income, the country parson has more than enough to do without worrying about doctrinal changes; and he finds the Devil doing perhaps even more than the devil all amount of business at the old stand.

THE CABINET.

Nobody has "Claim" to a Seat in It; the President Is Solely Responsible.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—SIR: Much is being said in the papers nowadays about the "claims" of certain people to be appointed Cabinet officers.

It is a misconception that should be corrected. No one has a "claim" to be appointed a member of the Cabinet. The President, and the President alone, selects the members of the official family forming his cabinet and, subject to confirmation by the Senate, is responsible to no one. Political leaders have no "claim." The members of the Cabinet are representatives of the President in the departments over which they preside.

President-elect Wilson is not called upon to consult any one as to whom he shall select for members of his official family. He will be and should be held entirely and absolutely responsible for the selections he shall make. He is entirely free and untrammelled and the selections he makes shall be his own.

But he should remember that the country will hold him responsible for proper and capable appointments, and in a way it is his duty to make selections which will give strength and confidence to his administration. Just at this time it is a subject of grave importance, and President-elect Wilson should strive earnestly and wisely to select the best of the best of men who he expects to strengthen him when in office.

NEW YORK, December 3. E. T. W.

BUILD DOWN, NOT UP.

A Mighty Cavern, Park Roofed, for the Equitable Site.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—SIR: The great work of the Equitable property makes a park there seem an extra-ordinary project for New York. As a matter of fact if the park were assessed on neighboring benefited properties the assessment would be a low percentage of their value. But it is not the park that the entire value of the site be taken.

A subterranean safety deposit building should be built that would leave the site, except for a one story entrance building, entirely clear at the street level, to be made into a park. There is no building in the city that is built for this purpose of safe storage. Vault devoted to that purpose are adjuncts of some other construction, and while affording great security do not afford so much as a structure devoted entirely to the purpose would. Such a structure could be made impenetrable to all assaults, whether of nature or of man.

It would be a very simple matter to lay out a building of this kind, to calculate its cost and its rental value and to compare the park there with the cost and value of the proposed thirty story structure. The difference would be the sum that the city should bear for the use of the surface as a park. It would be less by far than if the site were appropriated outright.

NEW YORK, December 3. ARTHUR DILLON.

A Weary Titan.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—SIR: I also am of skyscraper style of architecture, being several feet taller than the average man. My daily habit with my gray suit hat is to give the lubricant from the overhead lever mechanism that controls the operation of the subway car doors.

I have also a very close acquaintance with doorframes, headpieces, chandeliers, signs, etc., but count myself as fortunate that the impressions are not monotonously transmitted to me. Subliminal suggestion, I am sure, to a phrenologist would reveal to him a collection of contradictory bumps that would put his science to a severe test.

Now my principal cause for worryment is that my friends may form a conspiracy to charge me with a malfeasance, secure my arrest, indictment, trial, conviction and imprisonment, if not on evidence then on grounds of my personal appearance. The time would be most unfavorable for the righteous. I have within two days discovered with horror that the cells and cots in the Tombs are not constructed large enough for prominent people. Vain have been my attempts for half a dozen decades to be shed on the bias, cut gore or diagonal.

In eventualities I shall demand an adjustable or extendible bed, with a corresponding elastic mattress, and blankets of a length so as to have no cause to look me reproachfully in the face.

NEW YORK, December 2. TITAN.

The Preference of One Healer.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—SIR: An old woman, an omnivorous reader, a time newspaper woman, I feel that I am entitled to an opinion, and I submit one of my craniotomies. I have read the best, most interesting, most individual, most progressive and significantly suggestive and sentient newspaper I have ever in my life read.

From first to last the paper today was a delight, and I for one do heartily thank you editors and workers for it. (Mrs.) J. N. FINCH.

NEW YORK, December 1.

An Autograph With a Sentiment.

From the Independent.

The following lines, so apt today, are preserved in one of the glass cases in the Grand Army of the Republic Library Building, Chicago, and as far as known have never been printed.

Though women never can be men,
 By change of sex, and a that,
 To social rights and duties claim,
 Her claim is just, for a that.
 For that, and a that,
 His way, his way, his way,
 In all that makes a living soul,
 She makes, for that, for that,
 He'll hit up next the turkey trot.

WILLIAM LYDIO GARRISON.
 BOSTON, January 8, 1874.

THE COUNTRY MINISTER.

Are the Foundations of His Faith Shifting Beneath His Feet?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—SIR: In view of the changes in scriptural interpretation that are being suggested quite frequently in these days by conferences and societies of learned men who are presumed to know what they are talking about, it occurs to me that the time is ripe for a country minister's forward movement.

We have been so busily engaged in financial propaganda on behalf of men and religion that we have quite overlooked the country minister who is called to preach the gospel along the rural free delivery routes on a salary of \$500 a year.

In these days the minister of a small country parish never knows, even approximately, what to expect. His path is full of pitfalls. His life is one of perils and rude surprises. While stretching out his hands for the ancient donation his foothold is threatened by the shifting foundations of his faith. It is the hardest when the day's hard work is done strengthened in spirit by the comforting thought of everlasting flames for the wicked; he arises in the morning to discover that there is no hell, that it has been abolished overnight by a learned conference that has no need for it.

The country minister is a martyr. As a sectarian he asks for bread and is given a stone; as an old fashioned Christian he asks for a tangible hell of fire and brimstone and is given a catechism of mud and a human being he asks for a payment on his back salary and is given a second hand overcoat and a pair of fur mittens. Truly his life is not a bed of roses. But it is not a bed of worldly prosperity that turns his hair gray. It is the haunting fear that without a moment's warning the foundations of his faith may be kicked from beneath his feet.

Consider his plight. In the morning we find him weeding his little potato patch in the kitchen his wife is busy over the wash; on the table are the remnants of the last donation; three youngsters are digging in the sand behind the woodshed, while another, the oldest, is trudging along on his way to the little schoolhouse down by the church factory.

We see him again at night. The day's work is done and wife and children have gone to bed. He is alone in the sitting room reading the Good Book. Reverently he turns its pages; he reaches the sixteenth chapter of Luke and his face reflects the spiritual ecstasy that thrills him.

The parable of Lazarus and the rich man! Here is justice, stern and terrible—justice for the man who on earth was always clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day and justice for the poor beggar who was laid at his gate. Yes, there is justice in the thought of the rich man in torments, lifting up his eyes in hell and seeing the poor man in glory. He reads the wonderful parable again and again with infinite satisfaction.

We see him once more on the following day as the family gathers about the dinner table. His oldest son is reading the weekly paper that has just been delivered by the rural mail carrier. Suddenly the boy utters a word that has the matter of "Calvin" in it. "Calvin," inquires his father, anxiously. "Oh, pa," replies Calvin, gulping audibly, "there ain't no hell, they've cut it out!"

The blow falls like a thunderbolt from a clear sky. "No hell?" He cannot grasp the hidden meaning of the words. No hell! And he has preached it for twenty years, found in it a solace for the world's injustice, "sensed" it a thousand times in his bitter experiences.

He is too much for him to bear. He gropes his way in the sitting room, where he can be alone with his grief.

From that time on he is a changed man. Life has lost its zest. His spirit is broken, and soon it is whispered that his salary is to be reduced because he no longer preaches with his old-time fire and vigor.

You may compel a country minister to mortgage his household goods to buy the necessities of life, you may put him out in the road, bag and baggage, for nonpayment of his salary, you may refuse to help him in his distress, but you cannot take away these things he will endure with Christian fortitude. But when you rob him of his hell you break his spirit, you kill the hope that gives him life bearable, you strike a fatal blow at his sense of justice beyond the grave. For the country minister is a rugged character, his life is full of hardships and stern privations, and he demands an orthodoxy that is somewhat in accord with his environment. The pink tea variety may do for the urban sophisticates who with half closed eyes that turn neither to the right nor to the left ride to their pulpits in limousines, but it will never satisfy the lowly apostle of the wrath to come who lives the Devil whether or when he meets him without regard to consequences.

ALBANY, December 3. SIMON CREELE.

SOME BROOKLYN LOAFERS.

An Unwelcome Inherent of the Home Borough's Population.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—SIR: For the past few months the streets in the vicinity of Adams street and Flushing avenue have been making life miserable for the residents of this section of Brooklyn. The police have had orders to keep the streets clear of loafers who insult women and hold up pedestrians in the vicinity of Myrtle avenue after midnight.

A number of suspects have been caught in the police net, but it is said that some of these toughs have been arrested before they were released have resumed their old habits. The police have been gunning for these rascals for some months, but seem unable to catch them. The police are wise enough to be low while a patrolman is within hailing distance.

Young men feigning intoxication have picked the pockets of many a woman, and the sympathetic passerby tries to lead them back to the sidewalk. The loafers then manage to get their hands in the pockets of the helpers, and it is not until hours later, perhaps, that the loss of money or jewelry is discovered.

Acts of violence have become so frequent in this vicinity that the District Attorney has taken a hand and sent several of the detectives in his own office to investigate certain assaults and murders that have just occurred.

BROOKLYN, December 3. CITIZEN.

"In Defence of America."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—SIR: A book entitled "In Defence of America" has recently been written by a German, namely, Baron Von Taube, and is now on view at our circulating libraries. It is very well written, but as the author is evidently an intelligent man it's a wonder it did not occur to him to ask himself: Does America need defence?

NEW YORK, December 3. CHIEF.

On With the Dance.

Former Speaker Cannon states that he does not intend to do much dancing this winter, but expects to do a great deal of dancing, having a debutante granddaughter.—*Current Item.*

He's been a statesman forty years.

A czar for half a score.

And there's the thing a bore.

And therefore has resolved to stop

And follow Mr. Curveydorp.

The floppy frock he casts aside

With a disdainful shrug.

Behold him back feet, once his pride.

And toes who cut awakes surprise

And dazzles the beholder's eyes!

And that projective black cigar

Erst clenched between his teeth

And fondly cherished near and far,

Replaced, though this is rumor yet,

By an Egyptian cigarette!

Conceive him as in patent pump

He trips the arabian!

Observe his not ungraceful hump.

His away, his waving hand,

Lame duck, for that, for that,

He'll hit up next the turkey trot!

MAURICE MORRIS.

ROBERT COLLYER.

Some Reminiscences by Minot J. Savage of a Great Servant of God.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—SIR: A great, good man has fallen asleep. But he lives and works still in the hearts of many. From one who has known him most intimately for many years you may like a reminiscence or two of Robert Collyer.

He came to this country from Yorkshire, a blacksmith and a Methodist home preacher. He was working near Philadelphia. His spiritual father and lifelong friend was Dr. Furness, minister of the Unitarian church in Philadelphia.

About that time the late Moncure D. Conway was the Unitarian minister in Cincinnati. About to be married, he wished Dr. Furness to go out and perform the ceremony. It was not easy in those days for him to get a "supply" for his pulpit. He decided to give the young blacksmith a chance to try his wings. He told his trustees that he would like to be gone for two Sundays, and he asked them to supply him with the supply they could send him word and he would return after the first Sunday. But the word they did send him was that he could stay as long as he pleased.

Soon the young preacher went to Chicago and took charge of a new line of mission work. It grew, as all the world knows, till Dr. Collyer became a figure tall enough to be seen over two continents.

In 1873 Newman Hall, the famous preacher of London, was in this country lecturing. He was raised money to build a tower for his church, which was an appeal to our moneygivers he called the Lincoln Tower.

He was to lecture in Chicago, and I with hundreds of others helped to crowd the hall. It was a wild and stormy day. After we were gathered a telegram came saying the speaker would be an hour late. The manager was in despair. How could a crowd like that still wait in silence for a solid hour? Then he said Mr. Collyer and came and asked him if he would not employ his position for one, was amazed at the readiness and power of this man. He climbed to the platform and spoke for an hour till Dr. Hall's arrival was announced. And his address was so fine, so entertaining, so strong that the lecturer that came after him was a complete failure. The audience would have had more than his money's worth if Dr. Hall had been five hours late instead of one.

Such was he in the old days! Who else could have done it? M. J. SAVAGE.

NEW YORK, December 3.

CHRISTMAS BLACKMAIL.

A Familiar Method of Extracting the Jollity From the Festival.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—SIR: Some time ago the writer was in conversation with a friend about a